

REMARKS

Claims 11, 13-17, 33, and 35-38 are pending after the amendments.

The claims have been amended to be limited to a feature of the embodiment of Fig. 2 where the occurrence of the special symbol (shown in the center position) causes other symbols in the center column to be converted to the same special symbol. Since any single pay line (either straight or bent) only cuts across a particular reel once, the converted symbols in a single column are in different pay lines.

The examiner relied on O'Halloran (US Pat. 6,439,993) to reject all claims as being anticipated or obvious.

In O'Halloran, the appearance of a wild card symbol causes one or more other symbols on the same pay line to be converted to the wild symbol. Even if the pay lines are bent, a single pay line does not pass twice through a single reel. Each of O'Halloran's claims is limited to the conversion occurring on different reels so that the converted wild card symbols can be on the same "win line" as the original wild card symbol (see col. 1, lines 38-54). There is no suggestion in O'Halloran to convert symbols on the same reel to identical special symbols, as claimed in Claims 11 and 33, resulting in the converted symbols to not be on the same pay line as the original special symbol.

In the examiner's rejection of Claims 11 and 33 as being obvious over O'Halloran, the examiner points to the standard wording in every patent that "variations and modifications are within the scope of the invention," however, such language is not a suggestion or a disclosure of non-obvious modifications. Since O'Halloran is limited in his disclosure and claims to only converting symbols on different reels, and Applicant's Claims 11 and 33 are directed to a feature not suggested by O'Halloran, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are allowable.

Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to make the claims clearer, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (408) 382-0480 x202.

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September 5, 2007
Date of Signature

Respectfully submitted,

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